

Tackling Anti-social Behaviour

Anti social behaviour is a major concern for many communities in North East Derbyshire.

Tackling the problem is a key priority for the Council which has set a target of reducing such behaviour by 20% in relevant wards.

If unchallenged, Anti-Social Behaviour can inflict considerable suffering on communities. The term includes many types of behaviour that can blight the quality of community life. It can be comparatively low level nuisance, such as playing loud music or serious criminal offending, such as burglary and violence.

Anti Social Behaviour is not just restricted to youth. In North East Derbyshire over 70% of all ASB cases relate to adults



Tackling such problems has to be done in partnership. In our area this is done through the Community Safety Partnership. It is made up of agencies such as North East Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire Police, Derbyshire County Council, Probation, the Fire Service and the Primary Care Trust. During the past 12 months, over 200 cases of

serious Anti Social Behaviour have been referred to the Partnership. By using the legal powers now available, like Anti Social Behaviour Orders [ASBOs], Injunctions and Acceptable behaviour Contracts, offenders are restrained from doing further harm, whilst ways of changing their behaviour are explored.

Twin track approach

The Community Safety Partnership seeks to deal with Anti Social Behaviour in several ways. This can mean providing facilities for young people, such as skate parks, youth shelters, and drop-in centres, in order to divert them from becoming involved in Anti Social Behaviour. Similarly, support, advice, mediation and counselling services are made available to people of all ages, in an effort to challenge and change any unacceptable behaviour.

This twin track approach of Enforcement and Support, adopted in North East Derbyshire, appears to be working, as the following examples illustrate.

North East Derbyshire
Community Safety
Partnership



Anti-social

ASBOs

One young woman, who was a persistent and violent offender with both Drug and alcohol problems, was effectively terrorising residents of Dronfield. She was arrested and given an ASBO which banned her from entering both Dronfield and Chesterfield. If she breached the ASBO, she could be sent to prison for up to five years. An intensive package of support, supervised by the Probation Service, was attached to the ASBO. Before the ASBO, she had refused to work Youth Offending Team or Drug and Alcohol Workers, but afterward she obtained the support she so obviously needed. This joined up approach has resulted in the virtual elimination of her offending and has given relief to the communities affected. There have since been a further 9 ASBOs issued to people in North East Derbyshire.

Crackhouse Closure Orders

The Community Safety Partnership also obtained the first 'Crackhouse' Closure Order in the County. The ability to close premises where class A drugs, such as heroin, are being used, supplied or produced is a valuable tool in tackling the disorder and misery that such premises can



bring to communities. The Partnership worked with the residents of the Angel Estate in Clay Cross to bring about this ground breaking intervention. The Police and Council obtained overwhelming evidence of significant drug misuse and serious nuisance and disorder associated with the premises. A Closure Order was obtained and the property was boarded up. The occupants were prevented from returning to the Estate, or contacting any witnesses in the case, by virtue of an Injunction obtained by the Council.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

The Community Safety Partnership had particular success with a group of youths, who were causing severe nuisance in Eckington. They were getting drunk, congregating outside a shopping precinct, threatening both passers-by and shopkeepers, throwing stones at motor vehicles and damaging property.

The 'ring-leaders' were identified and interviewed. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were entered into, with advice that ASBOs and/or Possession proceedings (where parents were Council Tenants) would result if their conduct continued.

The Youth Service was enlisted to work with both the subjects of the ABC's and others in the gang. The Partnership has funded a 'youth Bus', staffed by Youth Workers, to travel to ASB hotspots within the district.

Reports indicated more than a 70% decrease in calls for the Police and both local residents and shopkeepers stated that the problems subsided. There were no reported breaches of the ABC's and monitoring meetings suggested a marked improvement in youth's behaviour, both at school and in the commu-



nity. In North East Derbyshire, over 85% of Acceptable Contracts are not breached. Over 50 ABC's have been issued to North East Derbyshire residents, both young people and adults, during the past twelve months.

Dispersal Orders

In Grassmoor, the residents, District and Parish Councillors highlighted a problem concerning large groups of people, congregating on the main road and behaving in a disorderly manner. Local residents reported incidents of abuse, threats of violence and damage to their property. People became fearful of walking past these groups and using the local shops. In response to this problem, a Dispersal Order was obtained under the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003. This meant that the Police were given extra powers to deal with groups of troublemakers in Grassmoor. The Police could force people to leave the area, for up to 24 hours, if it was felt that they were causing or likely to cause nuisance, alarm or distress to the public.

If anyone refused to leave the area when required, or returned within the 24 hour period, they could be arrested and face up to six months imprisonment and/or a hefty fine. In order to provide positive activities for those who were involved, the Youth Service has sent staff and the Youth Bus into Grassmoor.



Behaviour

Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions

Following complaints from local residents, The Council obtained an Injunction [restraining Order] against a man who had allegedly terrorised his neighbourhood. Whilst only one family came forward to give evidence in Court, the Anti Social Behaviour legislation allows the use of hearsay evidence. A police or Council Officer attends Court and gives the evidence of witnesses, without their identities being revealed. This process was used in this case, and gave a voice to those witnesses who, because of fear of reprisals, felt that they could not give direct evidence.

Within 24 hours of the reported incident [an assault and threats to kill], the Council had obtained an emergency Anti Social Behaviour Injunction, with an attached power of arrest. This type of Injunction had only become law the

previous day and the Council were the first in the Country to use it. The new Anti Social Behaviour Act gave the Courts the power to issue injunctions that were even capable of banning someone from their own home, if their behaviour was unacceptable enough.

In this Case, the Court prohibited the defendant from being involved in any behaviour that could cause nuisance, alarm or distress to his neighbours, and prohibited him from threatening or abusing his neighbours, or inciting anyone else to do so. The Court also ordered that he vacate his Council home within 10 days and banned him from entering the neighbourhood, thereafter.

Anyone who breaches such a Court Order faces immediate arrest and can be sent to Prison for up to two years. Over the past twelve months, the Council has obtained Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions against another thirteen North East Derbyshire residents.

Where can you get help and support?

Base 111 - (young person's substance misuse service)	0800 3893925
Connexions	01246 201581
Derbyshire Police	0845 1233333
Derbyshire Youth Offending Service	01246 347615
Education Social Worker	01246 204851
North East Derbyshire District Council	01246 231111
Social Services	01246 347777
SPODA (supporting people whose life is affected by someone else's drug use)	0800 0685718
Women's Aid	01246 540444
Youth Service	01246 861908



Tackle Anti Social Behaviour, don't tolerate it.

The use of these interventions, in addition to existing Police and Council powers, can make a massive difference to the quality of life of those who suffer from Anti Social Behaviour. However, to be able to make that difference, the Police and Council need the support of the communities they serve. Our communities no longer have to put up with the 'neighbours from hell', the groups of 'yobs' or the individual offenders who can blight the lives of the decent majority.

Incidents of Anti Social Behaviour that are serious and/or of a criminal nature should be reported to the Police. However, where the victim or perpetrator is a tenant of North East Derbyshire District Council, or where the incident of Anti Social Behaviour occurs within a housing estate managed by the Council, then the matter should also be reported to the Council's Housing Department.

Contacts

The Partnership Community Safety Unit
can be contacted on

01246 217016

website:

www.nedcsp.org.uk

or email:

community.safety@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk



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The logo for the North East Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership consists of a stylized 'S' and 'P' intertwined in a teal and red color scheme.